

Message Text

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61

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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R 291443Z OCT 75

FM AMCONSUL TANGIER

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3224

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

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USCINCEUR AND CINCUSNAVEUR FOR POLADS ALSO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SP SS

SUBJECT: VOLUNTEERS FROM THE NORTHERN PROVINCES EMBARK
FOR THE SAHARA

REF: TANGIER 0465

1. TANGIER GAVE MARCHERS FROM THE PROVINCES OF TANGIER,
TETOUAN AND CHAOUEN A TUMULTUOUS SEND OFF ON OCT 27TH. BY
ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR ALL OFFICES, SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES, SHOPS,
CAFES AND CINEMAS WERE CLOSED AT NOON TO ENABLE THE ENTIRE
POPULATION TO PARTICIPATE IN MASS RALLIES SCHEDULED DURING
THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING. PARTICIPATE THEY DID WITH AN
ENTHUSIASM BORDERING ON HYSTERIA. ACCORDING TO LOCAL
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OBSERVERS THERE HAS NOT BEEN SUCH A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION IN

TANGIER SINCE THE VISIT OF MOHAMMED V IN 1958.

2. THE STREETS WERE JAM PACKED WITH ADULTS OF ALL RANKS, GROUPS OF CHILDREN FROM EVERY LOCAL SCHOOL, CONTINGENTS OF CITIZENS FROM THE NEIGHBORING PROVINCES OF TETOUAN AND CHAOUEN AND OF COURSE THE MARCHERS FROM ALL THREE PROVINCES. MANIFESTATIONS DURING THE AFTERNOON WERE DISPERSED THROUGHOUT THE CITY BUT LATER THE CROWDS FOCUSED ON THE TRAIN STATION WHERE IN THE EARLY EVENING A TRAIN LOADED WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT DEPARTED TO THE CHEERS OF THE MULTITUDE. SEVERAL AMBULANCES, JEEPS AND LAND ROVERS WERE NOTED ON THE TRAIN ALONG WITH AT LEAST 150 COMMERCIAL TRUCKS FROM LOCAL FIRMS THE MOST CONSPICUOUS OF WHICH WAS A BRIGHT RED COCA COLA TRUCK. FOLLOWING THE DEPARTURE OF THE TRAIN GROUPS OF VOLUNTEERS DRESSED IN DESERT CLOTHING AND BEARING PACKS AND CAMPING EQUIPMENT LITERALLY DANCED THEIR WAY INTO THE TRAIN STATION TO THE RHYTHM OF DRUMS AND WIND INSTRUMENTS. IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE SCENE, FILLED WITH THE VIBRANT COLOR OF THE ARAB WORLD AND ALMOST OF ANOTHER AGE.

3. THE VOLUNTEERS (500 FROM TANGIER, 1500 FROM TETOUAN AND 500 FROM CHAOUEN) WERE MOSTLY FROM THE RURAL AREAS, I AM TOLD. CITY BRED MOROCCANS IN THIS AREA WERE LARGELY PASSED OVER IN FAVOR OF THOSE FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE ON THE APPARENT THEORY THAT THEY WOULD BE MORE MANAGABLE AND BETTER ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE RIGORS OF THE MARCH. WITH SOME 10,000 PERSONS VOLUNTEERING IN TANGIER PROVINCE ALONE, THE AUTHORITIES HAD NO DIFFICULTY SELECTING THOSE THEY FELT MOST SUITABLE. THE 2,500 VOLUNTEERS FROM THE THREE PROVINCES LEFT TOGETHER BY TRAIN DURING THE EARLY HOURS OF OCTOBER 28TH.

4. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SOME STAPLES FROM LOCAL SHOPS AND THE INCREASE OF PRICES FOR VARIOUS FOODSTUFFS DUE TO THE SHORTAGE OF COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION HAVE NOT DAMPENED THE HIGH SPIRITS PREVAILING HERE. THE POPULACE SEEMS TO LOOK UPON THESE MARKET DISTURBANCES AS AN UNAVOIDABLE ASPECT OF THE NATIONAL EFFORT. NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANY EVIDENCE OF SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE MARCH. TO THE CONTRARY ENTHUSIASM FOR THE MARCH AND CONFIDENCE IN ITS PURPOSE REMAINS HIGH AND EVEN SEEMS TO HAVE INCREASED OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS.

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